

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

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-----096176 271509Z /42

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4466
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9550

EXDIS (DIST AS NODIS)

JERU FOR ATHERTON

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR EG IS US
SUBJ: THE COMPASS TURNS TOWARD "PARTIAL AGREEMENTS" -- MEETING
WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN

1. THERE ARE SEVERAL STRAWS BLOWING IN THE WIND HERE
THAT BEGIN AND DAYAN HAVE REACHED A CONCLUSION ABOUT
WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT, AND
IT IS A CONCLUSION WHICH WOULD TAKE THE PACE PROCESS IN
A DIFFERENT DIRECTION THAN THE ROUTE WE HAVE BEEN TRYING
TO FOLLOW FOR MANY MONTHS. IN BRIEF, BEGIN AND DAYAN
SEEM TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT A FULL PEACE TREATY WITH
EGYPT IS UNATTAINABLE BECAUSE OF SADAT'S INSISTENCE ON
AN UNAVAILABLE ISRAELI COMMITMENT FOR NEAR TOTAL WITH-
DRAWAL IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THEY ARE THEREFORE
BEGINNING TO LOOK SERIOUSLY AT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR
PARTIAL AGREEMENTS AND LESS THAN FULL PEACE. BECAUSE
THE PHRASE "INTERIM AGREEMENTS" IS ANATHEMA TO THE LIKUD
PARTY, BEGIN HAS COME UP WITH A TYPICALLY BEGIN-ESQUE

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NEW SEMANTIC DEVICE TO DESCRIBE HIS IDEAS: "PERMANENT
PARTIAL AGREEMENTS." DAYAN ON THE OTHER HAND IS LESS
RELUCTANT ABOUT DISCUSSING A FURTHER "INTERIM AGREEMENT"
WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT HIS IDEAS.

2. DAYAN WENT INTO THIS FALL-BACK POSSIBILITY AT CON-
SIDERABLE LENGTH WITH SECRETARY VANCE AT LEEDS CASTLE.

WEIZMAN HAS STARTED TO TALK IN THESE TERMS TO ME IN RECENT DAYS AS WELL, TRIGGERED BY THE SUGGESTIONS SADAT MADE IN THEIR LAST MEETING AT SALZBURG, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY RESULTED IN BEGIN'S FUMBLING OF SADAT'S SUGGESTION OF AN "EL ARISH GESTURE." NOW BEGIN HAS TAKEN UP THE THEME IN EARNEST.

3. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE KNESSET CLOSING THE POLITICAL DEBATE ON MONDAY, JULY 24, THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PASSAGE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED AMID THE DRAMA OF OTHER PARTS OF THAT TUMULTUOUS DEBATE. BEGIN SAID THE FOLLOWING: QUOTE: WE WILL NOT GIVE ANY PRESENTS, NOT EVEN ONE GRAIN OF THE DESERT SAND AS A GIFT. WE CAN MAKE AGREEMENTS. IN OUR TIME, IT IS NECESSARY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PEACE TREATIES AND PEACE RELATIONS. WE WANT FULL PEACE TREATIES WITH ALL THEY ENTAIL: SECURE BORDERS, PASSAGE OF POPULATION, FREE COMMERCE, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, DEVELOPMENT AND MORE. HOWEVER, IF UP TO A CERTAIN DAY IT IS DIFFICULT--OR IMPOSSIBLE--TO ATTAIN THE PEACE TREATIES, WE ARE PREPARED TO GO ON THE WAY OF DEMANDING PEACE RELATIONS, TOO. THE EXAMPLE FOR THE DISTINCTION IS GERMANY IN EUROPE: AFTER WORLD WAR II, IT DID NOT SIGN A PEACE TREATY. OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DID SIGN A PEACE TREATY WHILE GERMANY LIVES IN PEACE RELATIONS WITH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS AND WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.

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AND THEREFORE, IF PRESIDENT AS-SADAT ACCEPTS OUR PROPOSAL AND AGREES TO HOLD A MEETING BETWEEN OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN ONE OF THE PLACES WHICH I HAD WRITTEN TO HIM ABOUT, WE WILL PROPOSE A CERTAIN SUGGESTION--IN COMPENSATION FOR AL 'ARISH AND SANTA KATERINA. IF HE ACCEPTS IT, WE SHALL MAKE AN AGREEMENT--NOT AN INTERIM AGREEMENT, NOT A TEMPORARY AGREEMENT, NOT AN AGREEMENT FOR THREE YEARS, NOT AN AGREEMENT WHICH NEEDS RENEWAL EVERY YEAR--BUT A PERMANENT AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH I HAD SPOKEN. AND THIS AGREEMENT WILL DETERMINE THAT ON A CERTAIN FRONT PEACE RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

WE ARE PREPARED TO GO THIS WAY, AND IF ANYONE SHOULD CALL IT A NEW WAY--I AGREE. I THINK THAT IT IS AN EXPERIENCED AND GOOD WAY, I REPEAT: WE WANT NEGOTIATIONS ON A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE, ON SIGNING PEACE AGREEMENTS WITH

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EXDIS (DIST AS NODIS)

ALL OUR NEIGHBORS, BUT IF IT IS IMPOSSIBLE AS FAR AS
THE NEIGHBORS ARE CONCERNED, WE WILL BE PREPARED TO
DISUCSS WITH THEM PEACE RELATIONS. AND HERE WE HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY: EGYPT'S PRESIDENT PROPOSED THAT WE GIVE
HIM SOMETHING. GIFTS--NO. NEGOTIATIONS ON AN AGREEMENT
ON THE BASIS OF MUTUALITY--YES. AND THEN WE WILL DETERMINE
PEACE RELATIONSHIPS IN A CERTAIN FIELD, AND IT
IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE SAME PROGRESS IN OTHER FIRELDS,
TOO, BUT EVERYTHING ON THE BASIS OF MUTUALITY. NO
UNILATERAL STEP WILL BE TAKEN BY ISRAEL TOWARD EGYTP,
NEITHER WILL WE DEMAND THAT EGYPT MAKE UNILATERAL STEPS
TOWARD US. EVERYTHING WILL BE DONE IN JUSTICE,
FAIRNESS AND HONESTY. END QUOTE.
BEGIN MADE THE SAME POINTS AGIAN LAST NIGHT IN AN INTERVIEW
ON ISRAELI TV.

4. WHEN I MET ALONE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE EVENING
OF JULY 26 TO DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECRETARY VANCE'S
PLANNED VISIT TO THE AREA, HE SAID TOWARD THE END OF
OUR CONVERSATION THAT HE WANTED TO DESCRIBE FOR MY EARS
ALONE (SIC), AND OF COURSE THOSE OF SECRETARY VANCE, HIS
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CURRENT THINKING ABOUT HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH EGYPT.
HE SAID THAT OF COURSE HE CONTINUED TO WANT COMPREHENSIVE
PEACE TREATIES WITH ALL OF ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS. IF

HOWEVER THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEN PERHAPS WE COULD WORK TOWARD THE SIGNING OF SEVERAL "PERMANENT, PARTIAL AGREEMENTS-- ON A FULLY RECIPROCAL BASIS." HE THEN MADE AN ELABORATE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUCH PARTIAL AGREEMENTS WHICH WOULD BE PERMANENT RATHER THAN TIME LIMITED (A CLEAR REFERENCE TO ONE ASPECT OF THE SINAI II AGREEMENT), AND THE "INTERIM UNILATERAL AGREEMENTS" WHICH AHD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REACHED WITH THE EGYPTIANS. HE POINTED OUT THAT SINAI II WAS UNILATERAL IN THE SENSE THAT THERE WAS NO QUID PRO QUO FROM EGYPT FOR ISRAEL'S CONCESSIONS; RATHER IT WAS THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAD PAID AND PAID HEAVILY TO ISRAEL IN VARIOUS WAYS IN RECOMPENSE FOR THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT THE PROPER MODEL FOR FUTURE AGREEMENTS: THEY SHOULD BE FULLY RECIPROCAL BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AT INTEREST.

5. AS AN EXAMPLE AND PURELY AN EXAMPLE, HE REFERRED TO THE IDEA OF RETURNING EL ARISH AND MOUNT SINAI TO EGYPTIAN CONTROL. REITERATING THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN "FREE GESTURES," HE SAID THAT THIS MIGHT BE SOMETHING WHICH COULD BE DONE IN EXCHANGE FOR A PROPER QUID PRO QUO FROM EGYPT--FOR EXAMPLE, A SECRET WRITTEN AGREEMENT THAT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE RAFAH AREA COULD REMAIN, NOT GUARDED BY THE ISRELI ARMY BUT PERHAPS BY SOME FORM OF LOCAL BORDER GUARDS TO PROTECT THEM.

6. BEGIN SAID HE SAW THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A NUMBER OF SUCH "PERMANENT PARTIAL AGREEMENTS" AS BUILDING BOLCKS TOWARD AN EVENTUAL COMPREHENSIVE PEACE TREATY. HE WENT BACK AS HE HAD IN HIS KNESSET SPEECH TO THE MODEL
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OF GERMANY, WHERE WITHOUT FORMAL PEACE TREATIES, NONETHELESS PEACEFUL REALTIONS HAVE GRADUALLY BEEN NEGOTIATED AND ESTABLISHED.

7. I URGED THAT BEGIN NOT PREMATURELY GIVE UP THE SEARCH FOR A FULL PEACE TREATY WITH HIS NEIGHBORS, AND TRIED TO DRAW HIM BACK IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SCENARIO WE ARE CURRENTLY FOLLOWING. HE INSISTED THAT OF COURSE HE WAS NOT GIVING UP, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH HE IS VEERING.

8. IN LIGHT OF THESE SIGNALS, AND SOME OF SADAT'S STATEMENTS TO WEIZMAN AT SALZBURG WHICH HINTED AT SOME PARALLEL THINKING, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD START NOW TO LOOK MORE SERIOUSLY AT FALL-BACK OPTIONS OF A LIMITED NATURE. I FRANKLY SEE NO WAY WE WILL SUCCEED IN EXTRACTING FROM BEGIN THE KIND OF OVERALL COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAWAL WHICH SEEMS NECESSARY FOR SADAT TO NEGOTIATE A REAL PEACE

TREATY WITH ISRAEL. AND I AM CONVINCED WE WILL BE
LOOKING FOR FALL-BACKS SOONER THAN WE WISH TO BLOCK A
SLIDE BACK IN THE DIRECTION OF TOTAL STALEMATE IN THE
PEACE PROCESS.
LEWIS

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